

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement  
of**

**Subcommittee on Energy Ranking Member Bobby Rush**

***Oversight of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the FY2019 Budget***

**April 17, 2018**

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this very timely hearing today and I look forward to hearing from the FERC commissioners on some of the more pressing issues regarding both the reliability and resiliency of the nation's electric grid.

Mr. Chairman, just last week this Subcommittee heard from Energy Secretary Perry on what he considered a very real concern regarding grid reliability.

Specifically, the topic of DOE potentially using its emergency authority under Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act to grant the request made by First Energy to issue an emergency must-run order for 85 coal and nuclear plants within the PJM Interconnection came up repeatedly.

In fact, Secretary Perry seemed to be sounding the alarm that we are quickly heading towards a point-of-no-return, when the imminent retirement of several coal and nuclear plants would leave the nation in a situation where we would be unable to meet our energy demands if we do not act soon.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing the commission's views on this critical issue.

Another topic of great debate during last week's DOE hearing focused on the March 2018 study by the National Energy Technology Laboratory, or NETL.

That report highlighted the use of coal during the prolonged cold snap that the nation experienced between December 2017 and January 2018.

The NETL study concluded that within the PJM region, coal provided the most resilient form of generation during this cold blitz.

It went on to say that without the available capacity from coal facilities, then PJM would have experienced power shortfalls and widespread blackouts.

However, Mr. Chairman, just this past Friday, PJM issued its own response to the NETL study, refuting those conclusions and stating that PJM indeed had adequate amounts of resources to supply power and did not need to invoke emergency procedures.

PJM also noted that while coal and nuclear played an important role during this period, that was due more to economic factors and its region never faced any real reliability threat.

Mr. Chairman, as the agency responsible for ensuring the reliability of the nation's electric grid, I look forward to hearing directly from the FERC commissioners on this and other important issues.

Specifically, I would like to commend the agency for its recent unanimous vote finalizing a rulemaking allowing for aggregated distributed energy resources to compete in wholesale markets.

This vote marked an important step in the right direction by allowing advanced technologies, such as demand response, energy storage, electric automobiles, and solar photovoltaics to participate in the wholesale markets.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, I also have some concerns regarding a recent policy change determining how impacted stakeholders may intervene in pipeline reviews.

I would like to hear from the commission on its justification for becoming "less lenient" in allowing intervenors to join proceedings that are "out of time", and how these new changes might impact public input and participation in the pipeline review process.

So, Mr. Chairman, I look forward to engaging the commissioners here today, and with that, I yield back the balance of my time...